
The Mustard Seed



Armadale Uniting Church

Edition 26 – Lent 2018

Greetings from Fiona

Dear friends.

As I write, we are deep into the season of Lent.

This is a time of reflection and inner examination. How am I? How am I going? What is working in my life and what needs to change?

It is, or can be, a painful time when we realise we can no longer kid ourselves and, however much we think we can kid everyone else, we can no longer kid God – as if we ever could!

So, it is a time for sober reflection, for taking stock and for wondering about different and alternative possibilities not just for our own lives, but for the life of our community and indeed for the life of the world.

It is a moment of - and for - truth.

And therefore, it is a moment full of hope and, as yet, untapped grace.

The hard road that Jesus walks to his death in Jerusalem and the growing realisation for him of what awaits makes us wonder. What courage and character to confront such a future and to continue, despite the malice, threat and turmoil, to trust the goodness of his loving Father.

We have so much to learn from him and his relationship with God.

Jesus challenges us to open our eyes, to wake up, to keep watch and pray.

We can no longer kid ourselves. We must no longer kid ourselves.

Here at Armadale we are beginning to face the reality of our future. It is a moment of – and for – truth. And while it is sobering and confronting, I want to say, it is a moment full of hope and, as yet, untapped grace.

It is time for courage and character. It is time to continue on, trusting the God who, in covenant love, has promised never to leave us or forsake us, the God who is present in Jesus Christ where two or three are gathered in his name, the God who calls us, for his name's sake and for the sake of all creation, to go and share what we have so freely received in Christ with grace and joy and hope.

What an adventure! What a call on our lives!

Join us! Come along as you are able. Pray for us.

The children are helping us find the way.

Here are their prayers...Use them. Pray them. Simple as...

Please guide us to the future God – Sophie.

Hear our joy. Make stillness...Hope can help – Sam.

Joy hears us... Forgive everyone... Have more to celebrate – Emily.

Remember – Lent is not for ever...there is the promise always for us as Christians of a new day, a new dawn... and we will get there...however much we must endure first.

Blessings to you this Lenten season – and beyond into the joy and hope of Easter.

‘God so loved the world He gave His only Son...’ John 3:16

Fiona Winn March 2018

From the editors...

This is our Lent issue so we've included some appropriate articles. For example, have you thought about fasting?

Of course, we've also included the times of our Holy Week services.

Other items of interest include an article by Peggy Miller. We were very pleased to have Peggy and Doug with us for a number of weeks, and we think you'll find Peggy's article of particular interest.

— Bill Rush and Graeme Harris

In this issue

| | |
|---|----|
| From Fiona | 1 |
| Editorial | 2 |
| Prayers on the Move | 2 |
| What about Fasting? | 3 |
| Small but Mighty | 4 |
| Easter Services | 4 |
| Back Home in Indiana | 5 |
| The Acts of the Apostles | 6 |
| The Day the Revolution Began | 7 |
| Rev Deacon Steve Crump | 8 |
| A Cameron Story to the End of the Earth | 9 |
| Around Armadale | 12 |

* * * * *

PRAYERS ON THE MOVE

In Lent 2016, trains on the London Underground carried this advertisement:

Today's Prayers

1. I feel I don't care anymore, but I don't want to be that kind of person. Please help me to start caring again.
2. I am seeking. I am hesitant and uncertain. Watch over each step of mine, guide me.
3. O Lord, you know how busy I must be today. If I forget you, do not forget me.
4. I'm not sure where my career's going. Guide me as I try to work out what's important.
5. Before I forget (I always forget): thanks.

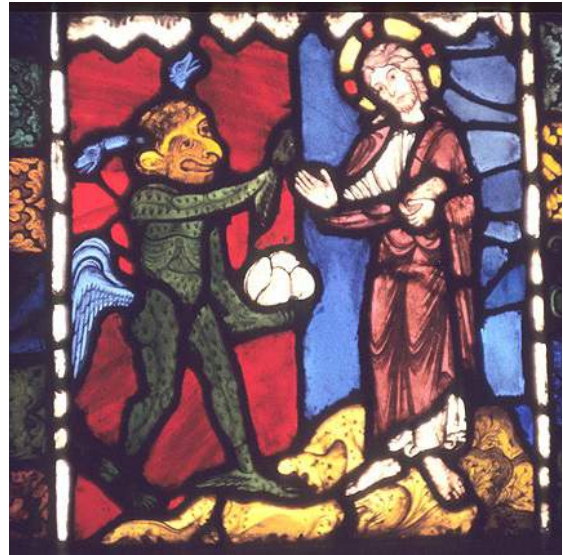
There is nothing innocuous or safe about the gospel. Jesus did not get crucified because he was a nice man.

Walter Brueggemann

Walter Brueggemann is a foremost Old Testament scholar. He lives in the USA and has written prophetically about many social issues.

What about Fasting?

Bill Rush



Temptation of Christ by the Devil in the Wilderness, stained glass, V&A Museum, London

In all my years in the Uniting Church I can't remember a time when the subject of fasting was seriously discussed. Of course it doesn't mean that nobody in our denomination ever fasts – but who knows any among us who have attempted it, either occasionally or regularly? Maybe those who do practise it, keep it to themselves – perhaps being very conscious of Jesus' scathing criticism of the some of the religious types of his day - especially those who liked to parade their fasting and spiritual superiority in front of others.

In some churches, other than our own, fasting is a regular a part of the rhythm of church life. Orthodox Christians for instance, are encouraged to fast on the morning before Communion so that nothing touches their lips before the reception of the Body and Blood of Christ. In Lent, their fast becomes considerably more complicated.

So why is this subject more or less off the agenda in our own church? We seem to have barely noted that Jesus himself fasted (Matt 4:2). In the Sermon on the Mount Jesus doesn't *command* his disciples to fast; he simply assumes '*when you fast...*'.(Matt:6:17).*

Fasting, allied to prayer, was very common in the Early Church. And as Protestants we should note that fasting was not rejected by the Reformers. John Wesley himself recommended fasting and he himself fasted every Friday. In fact, he would not allow anyone to minister in the Methodist connection if they did not follow this practice. I assume this clause is not on the books in any of our presbyteries today.

Perhaps this seems like religion by rules and I guess this can easily happen when divorced from prayer. Fasting does seem to be particularly connected to Lent and we have all been in conversations at work or home when the question is asked – often jokingly – what are you giving up for Lent? The replies are often humorous and relate to something which one is all too glad to give up. Perhaps a few see these forty days as a useful way of losing the odd kilo.

But there is something deeper to look for here. Peter Leithart claims that fasting nurtures hope, strengthens faith, and deepens love.* Is this so? We won't know until we try it.

* *Faith, Hope, Love, Fast* by Peter Leithart . *First Things*.12.2.16
prate.

Small but mighty

Some extracts from the U.S. Congregational Life Survey 17/2/2014:

Many people think of small congregations in 'gloom and doom' terms – not enough people, not enough money, not enough of anything. But the survey reveals that small congregations have definite measurable strengths, strengths that the people who worship there might not always recognise. That's not to say that everything's great – many small churches do struggle.

However, small congregations tend to have higher scores than the bigger ones on the 'Growing Spiritually Index'. Small congregations also have the largest proportions of people participating in the life of the congregation beyond worship, involved in small groups, in leadership, and in congregational decision making.

The survey also found that the size of the congregation makes no difference when it comes to offering meaningful worship. In fact, in smaller congregations fewer people reported feeling boredom or frustration during the service and were more likely to offer worship services that help people with their everyday lives.

Worshippers in smaller congregations also do well in sharing their faith with others – by inviting people to worship, getting involved in outreach to their communities, and looking for ways to talk to others about their faith. Being a small congregation can be a strength. People come to know each other and really care.

Lent/Easter services

All services at Kooyong Road

Palm/Passion Sunday, Sunday 25 March 2018: 9.30 am

Wednesday 28 March, 10 am: Quiet contemplation (come and go as you can)

Maundy Thursday, Thursday 29 March, 7 pm: Holy Communion and foot washing

Good Friday, Friday 30 March 2018, 9.30 am: "The Foolishness of God"

Holy Saturday, 31 March, 10 am - 12 noon: Cleaning and contemplation

Easter Sunday, Sunday 1 April 2018, 9.30 am: "All Fools' Day" and Holy Communion

During Lent, the Church is open, as usual, each Wednesday morning from 10 am for quiet contemplation followed by discussion on the Gospel for the day.

Also, there will be a Tenebrae service on Thursday 29 March at 6:30 at the Ewing church. This year they are experimenting with having lamb and salad instead of fish and chips. The cost is still \$10. They would need to know numbers by Monday 26th if possible. (RSVP to joycejenkin@aardvark.net.au)

Back Home in Indiana

Peggy Miller



It's been a privilege to have been joined by Doug and Peggy Miller for a number of weeks. We've learned that while in some ways there are similarities in our communities, there are also differences. Peggy wrote this article for us.

Thank you for the warm hospitality extended during our stay in Armadale. The Sunday service kept us connected to the body of Christ and allowed us to worship with fellow believers. Pastor Fiona's messages were inspiring and provided food for the soul through God's Word. We extend a sincere invitation to visit us in our hometown of Goshen and to join us in worship at The New Paris First Brethren Church, which is in the nearby town of Paris.

The Brethren Church began as an Anabaptist Christian movement with roots traced to Germany. The denomination has undergone several splits due to doctrine disagreements. Currently, there are about 120 churches associated with the First Brethren side of the split. Our national office is located in Ashland Ohio; a seminary and a college share the same campus area. Our small congregation averages about 65 for a Sunday service and about 50 for a Wednesday evening neighborhood outreach for children and teens. Our mission is simple. We believe that Jesus calls us to be courageous disciples by word and action: To surrender ourselves to God, To embrace one another, To express God's love for all creation. We find living in a rural conservative community allows us to practice our faith in peace and service to others.

Goshen is a small midwestern town incorporated in Elkhart County near the Michigan border. We are 120 miles east of Chicago and 150 miles north of Indianapolis which is our state capital. Indianapolis is also home to the Indy 500 race ran every Memorial weekend in May. Goshen is the county seat with a population of 33,000. Elkhart county has a population of 204,000 and consist of seven small towns. The locals refer to our county as the recreational vehicle (RV) capital of the world. Much of the local economy depends on the recreational industry for employment opportunities. We are also known for our sizable Amish and Old Order Mennonite population which constitutes small and high producing farm operations.

Agriculture has a rich heritage in Indiana. With acres of flatland and fertile soil, farming includes the production of food crops, diary, and the raising of livestock. There's plenty of corn in Elkhart County as well as soy beans. The small Amish farming community of Shippshewana with a population of only 658 (a 30 minute drive from Goshen) is a favorite tourist attraction drawing thousands to its weekly flea market. With a traffic mix of horse and buggies, as well as motor vehicles from all over the US during the warmer months of the year, Shippshewana is a unique destination experience. Fall is a beautiful time to visit when the leaves are in full color and before the weather turns cold.

Goshen has freezing and windy winters with an average of 41 inches of snow beginning in November and usually ending late March. However, April and even early May can bring a few flakes. Because of our proximity to the Michigan Great Lakes, we often experience lake effect snow. Our summers (June, July, and August) are hot and humid. We live in an area that can experience tornadoes. Tornadoes are more likely to strike Indiana in the spring, with the highest activity occurring in June. Over the course of the year, the temperature typically varies

from -7 degrees to 26 degrees Celsius.

As you can imagine, we find the Melbourne and surrounding suburbs much different in weather, geography and population. However, we have also discovered that God's love has no boundaries. There is much more that unites us than divides us. Thank you for making us feel right at home. God bless you and your service to our Lord and Saviour in Armadale.

The Acts of the Apostles

It wasn't all action.
Sometimes they stopped in their tracks
struck dumb by the thought
that they had walked, talked, eaten and
drunk with the Lord of Creation.
How to explain that to their grandchildren,
let alone strangers!

The story could not to be contained.
It burst forth from their mouths
as they followed the Spirit.

Sometimes they stopped to pray
(though isn't prayer action?).

For some, their last act on earth,
meant death.

Bill Rush



We expect to receive again our own bodies, though they be dead and cast into the earth, for we maintain that with God, nothing is impossible.

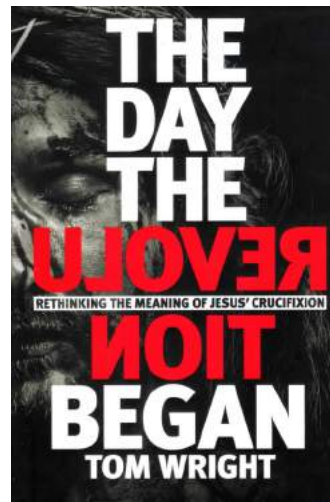
Justin Martyr

Justin Martyr was a Gentile born about 100 AD in Samaria. He was a strong defender of the faith. He wrote to the Emperor Antinous asking that the then persecution of Christians be stopped. He was eventually martyred.

Graeme and Bill are always pleased to receive contributions from all members of the congregation for *The Mustard Seed*. These might be relevant photos, letters to the editors on an aspect of Christian or church life, your favourite hymns, concerns, travels, reflections, memories, book and movie suggestions and reviews, your life story, etc. In short, whatever you think might be of interest to others in the congregation. We would welcome anything from 50 to 500 words.

The Day the Revolution Began

Reviewed by Karel Reus



By Tom Wright, 2016, , London, SPCK.

This is a densely argued and methodical book that progresses inexorably towards a clarification of what Jesus' crucifixion was really all about. Wright, a pop star of biblical scholarship and a master of communication, brings the full weight of his intellect and skill to the task of answering the fundamental questions of why did Jesus die, and what did his death mean for the world. Wright seeks to answer these questions, or at least throw light on them, in the context of a continuing theological debate. In his own words:

'... the churches of the Reformation, including my own, have not known what to do with Easter itself. Conservatives have said that Jesus was bodily raised, while liberals have denied it, but neither group has seen the bodily resurrection as the launching of God's new creation within the present world order.' P 34.

It would not be fair to categorise Wright as a conservative. Such labels are not helpful. Nevertheless it is reasonable to place him in the mainstream of biblical scholarship. He is not afraid to pose radical questions, but he does so within a relatively orthodox framework. Yes, he affirms, Jesus did die at Passover in 33 CE. Yes, he did rise physically on the following Sunday. Yes, he left a trail of evidence that he had risen. Yes, he understood himself as being the inaugurator of God's new kingdom. Yes, he understood himself as the culmination of Jewish hope as set out in scripture. But no, Jesus' death was not a free ticket for sinners to enter heaven. No, the forgiveness of sins achieved by Jesus' death was not tied to what Wright calls the "works contract" (Jesus will get you through the eye of the needle, because your sins are now forgiven). No, salvation is not about heavenly reward, because *heaven* (the realm of God) and *earth* (the realm of human-kind), are co-existent and intertwined. Again, in Wright's own words:

'... the early Christian message is not well summarised by saying that Jesus died so that we can go to heaven. That way of looking at the gospel and mission both shrinks and distorts what the Bible actually teaches. It ignores Jesus' claim to be launching God's kingdom "on earth as in heaven" and to be bringing that work to its climax precisely on the cross. It ignores the New Testament's emphasis on the true human vocation, to be "image bearers" reflecting God's glory into the world and the praises of creation back to God'.
P357

God's Kingdom is not some paradise-like reward for saved sinners, but is a new and liberated realm in

the here and now where we become free to be true images of God, where forgiveness of sins provides opportunity to *worship* (our true vocation), to *witness* to God's love and grace, and to *hope* and work for justice in this world rather than the next.

The main point of this substantial book (its *crux* if you like) is the fundamental article of Christian faith that asserts that Jesus' death on the cross was not defeat but victory. Wright's position on this is firm and uncompromising, though he allows that it is hard to understand just how it works. At 6:00 pm on that Passover Friday the world changed; the revolution had begun. Jesus' suffering and death defeated sin, and made it possible for our *worship*, our *witness*, our *hope*, indeed our total *mission* to take effect. This does not mean that we will not suffer; that we will not need to struggle, that there is nothing for us to do, but the Cross stands as assurance that the major war with the forces of evil has been won, and that our sufferings and struggles are always to be understood in that perspective. The Cross, argues Wright, makes it possible for us to live a radical new life; to break with the idolatrous attachment to false gods, and to be compassionate. The Cross puts us on the winning side in the war, even though many battles have, and will be, lost.

Obviously, Wright is speaking theologically to theologians. But he writes for a wider audience as well. This is a clear book, but it is not an easy read. All the same I found it almost compulsive; I was pulled through the argument step by step, and I constantly looked, as in a thriller, for the culminating punch line, or the revelation of "who done it". If you get to read it, allow time, and be prepared for a bit of work. No pain, no gain! You won't be disappointed.

* * * * *

We were delighted to have Rev Deacon Steve Crump lead us in worship on 11 March, and look forward to having him with us on more occasions over the next few months.



A Cameron story to the end of the earth

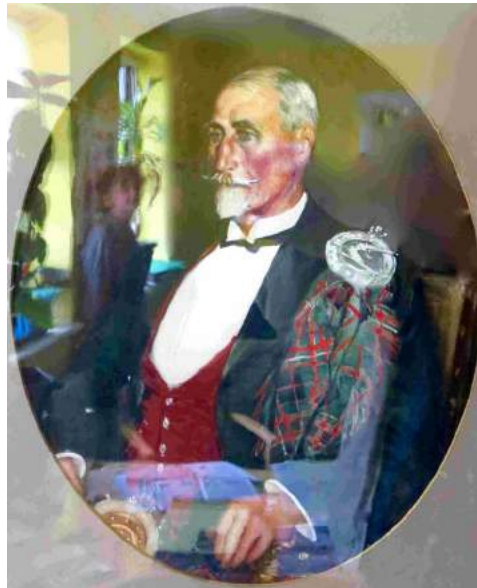
Heather Cameron

Oh, to have asked more questions and listened harder

My Cameron forebears came from a tiny village, now almost non-existent, known as Cille Mhaire (Kilmorie) on Loch Slapin on the Isle of Skye.

Skye was no stranger to the injustice and brutality of The Scottish Clearances of the 1800s when tenants were served with three months' notice of eviction or suffer the consequences. Many went to the colonies; Canada, New Zealand or Australia. It was slightly different with my family.

My great-grandfather, Donald, left Skye before eviction was enforced, around 1844-46. The family moved to the mainland and modestly prospered. Of Donald's four sons, Norman served in the British Army in India, where he died, Murdoch went to Canada, where he drowned, Alexander remained in Scotland and Keith, my great-uncle, a gamekeeper, went to the Falkland Islands as an employee of the Falklands Islands Company in 1867, aged 27. He wrote to his brother, Norman, about his life:



Portrait of Keith Cameron



Cemetery overlooking Port Stanley Sound

April 1868

I still continue to like this place well enough. There is not much society. There are about 12 wooden houses in the settlement of which I occupy one and the shepherds' houses are scattered up and down the camp...I very often take a turn out into the camp, of course on horseback. No one thinks of walking here. At first I was a very poor equestrian, but now I can ride like a gaucho...it is a very healthy country. I have not had a day's illness since I came.

He prospered in the trading and farming industries and took up land in Port San Carlos (the British forces landing place in the 1982 Falklands War) and established a sheep farm. He was involved with the innovation of freezing works on the Islands.

In 1891, Keith invited his nephew, my grandfather, Jock, then 27, also a gamekeeper, from Dumfries, Scotland, to join him. Jock became manager at Port San Carlos farm. He married Fran Williams, daughter of a local entrepreneurial trader and they raised eight children, my father, Ian, being the fifth child. The family finally moved to southern England in the 1920s where my grandparents died circa 1940. The farm remains in Keith's family.

I was raised on the Falklands family mythology. Tales of children being ferried in donkey panniers, herbal recipes in lieu of medical help, the wind-bent trees, driving a car across the frozen sea at Punta Arenas, a man whose severed leg froze after being put in a splint which subsequently healed, suffering patients strapped to a chair for the removal of tonsils or teeth without anaesthetics. Conditions were primitive.

In February 2013, my brother and I decided to see for ourselves where our father was raised and took a cruise to the Falklands via the Chilean fjords, Cape Horn and Southern Patagonia. At Punta Arenas we visited the family mausoleum and read of the Cameron-Williams contributions to the development of sheep farming, trading and banking in that part of the world. At the town museum I found this (handwritten) letter of offer and wondered if it was similar to Keith's experience:

15 July 1884

Your application in reply to my advertisement in the 'People's Journal' for shepherds to the Falkland Islands.... The engagement is for five years and the wages ... at the rate of £45 for the first year £55 for the second year and £60 each for the third, fourth and fifth years with a free railway ticket to the port of embarkation and a free passage out by steamer. After 5 years' satisfactory service, should those who are engaged care for remaining on the Islands, remuneration at the rate of £5/10- per month will be given and after 10 years' service £6 per month.

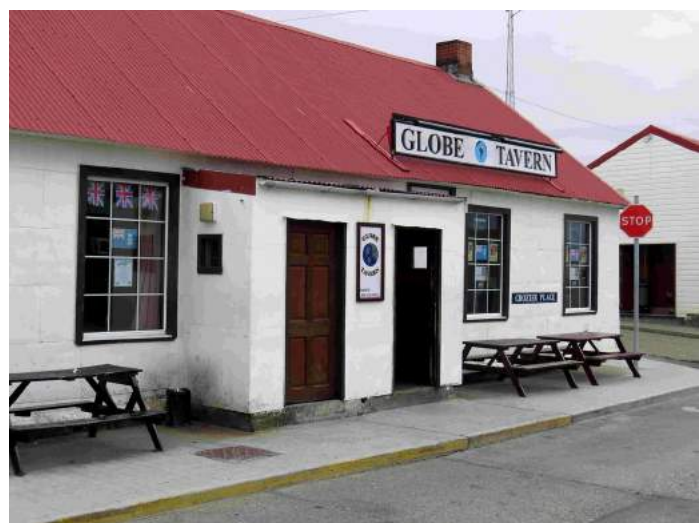
A preference will be given to young men under 30 years of age who have been accustomed to hill pasture ... return the enclosed form at once along with certificates of character and ability for at least five years back...

In addition to the above wages the shepherds engaged will be allowed lodgings and 2 lbs of meat daily free.

Arriving at Port Stanley in the Falklands (pop 1899: 1,800, now 2,800) just prior to the Referendum on support, or not, for the continuation of being an Overseas Territory of the UK, was like walking into an English village. It was obvious from the display of Union Jacks on every corner, that these people were Anglo-centric.

Keith and Jock are still remembered with respect and affection and referred to as 'KC' and 'JG' to this day. Visiting the gravestones of our great-grandmother and other family members at the cemetery overlooking the entrance to Port Stanley was deeply moving.

Tiny though it is, Stanley has a lovely Anglican cathedral, Christ Church, the southernmost cathedral in the world! Built of local stone in 1892 with beautiful stained-glass windows, it has the equivalent of a lych-gate made of whalebone. There is also a handsome weatherboard Catholic Church, St Mary's. Stanley sports a couple of red double-decker buses, some English looking terrace houses, red phone-boxes, a Government House, a War Memorial, shipwrecks, its own newspaper 'The Penguin News' and a convivial pub called 'The Globe' where we were given a warm welcome and treated to the local beer.



The Globe Tavern Port Stanley

On a good day it takes three hours to travel the 108 km from Port Stanley to Port San Carlos along poor tracks. It was a bad day and we were disappointed that the conditions meant we had insufficient time to visit the homestead. The Falklands climate is harsh, squally with constant strong winds blowing. It is well-tolerated by sheep, penguins, kelp and the Scots!

The Camerons later took up land and started estancias (farms) in Eastern Patagonia, stocking them with sheep from the St Carlos farm. We visited Camarones (birthplace of Argentinian President Juan Peron 1895-1974), a coastal township in Chubut Province where Keith and Jock established Estancia Lochiel (after the Clan Chief) in 1897. It is 147,000 hectares and runs 47,000 sheep, nowadays Corriedales. Normally there are eight workers with one dog per man, including gauchos, a cook and a boss. A team of 10 shearers plus assistants and a cook come in for shearing for 4-5 weeks, one man shearing 130 sheep per day, all mustered on horseback.

We were amazed to find out that Lochiel had been expropriated by the Argentine Generals during the Falklands War (1982) when it was renamed Estancia Argentina and used as an army barracks for reserve troops. It has reverted, but both name signs are visible. Lochiel remained in the family until the late 1970s.

©Heather Cameron

Estancia Lochiel sign at Lochiel



Estancia Argentina sign at Lochiel



Christ Church Cathedral, Port Stanley (right),
and cenotaph at Port Stanley (below)



Around Armadale.....

Christmas— Our Christmas services were meaningful and inspiring (Christmas Eve service, with children, right)



(Left) The Congregation participated in “Safe Church” training on 18 February. Susie led us through the comprehensive materials provided by Synod (in the form of a “Participant’s Booklet”). There are now strict laws about these issues, and clearly Synod is taking this issue very seriously. The session covered a lot of ground, and left us all with “food for thought”.

Armadale Uniting Church,
86A Kooyong Road (cnr Clarendon Street),
ARMADALE Vic 3143

Minister: Rev Fiona Winn

ucarmadale@gmail.com

0403 662 786

Organist: Rowan Kidd

www.armadale.unitingchurch.org.au

Regular service times (except January): 9.30 am each Sunday.

Children’s program: 1st Sunday of the month, during term time.

During January, and occasionally at other times, we hold combined services with the other Stonnington region Churches, instead of meeting at Armadale.